

Message Text

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51

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SP-03 AID-20 EB-11 NSC-07 RSC-01

CIEP-03 TRSE-00 SS-20 STR-08 OMB-01 CEA-02 CIAE-00

COME-00 FRB-03 INR-11 NSAE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 LAB-06

SIL-01 L-03 H-03 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15 AGR-20 SWF-02

INT-08 FEA-02 SCI-06 FMC-04 CG-00 DOTE-00 FAA-00 IO-14

EUR-25 DLOS-07 COA-02 DRC-01 /254 W
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R 041432Z SEP 74 ZDK

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6843

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

UNCLAS PORT OF SPAIN 2124

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD PFOR ECIN TD HA XL

SUBJECT: HAITI-TRINIDAD INTERIM TRADE AGREEMENT

1. IN A SPECIAL CABINET MEETING HELD ON THE AUGUST 31 INDEPENDENCE DAY, THE GOVERNMENT OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO APPROVED AN INTERIM TRADE AGREEMENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF HAITI. PRIME MINISTER WILLIAMS ANNOUNCED THAT THIS AGREEMENT RESULTED FROM DISCUSSIONS HELD EARLIER THAT WEEK BETWEEN TRINIDAD'S MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE AND THE HAITIAN SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE. IN THE SHORT RUN, WILLIAMS SAID TRINIDAD WILL EXPORT AUTOMOBILES, REFRIGERATORS, STOVES AND GARMENTS TO HAITI, AND WILL RECEIVE IN TURN RICE, REFINED SUGAR, FLOUR AND ONIONS. OVER THE LONGER RANGE, THE AGREEMENT FORESEES TRINIDAD

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SELLING OIL, FERTILIZER, AND ASPHALT IN EXCHANGE FOR

HAITI'S MEAT AND TEXTILES. THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO SAID THAT THE TWO GOVERNMENTS WILL INVESTIGATE THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING BETTER SEA AND AIR LINKS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION PAID TO SERVICES THAT CAN BE PROVIDED BY THE GOTT-OWNED BRITISH WEST INDIAN AIRWAYS (BWIA).

2. WILLIAMS SAID THAT 3,000 TONS OF REFINED SUGAR AND 25,000 BAGS OF FLOUR HAVE ALREADY BEEN ORDERED FROM HAITI, AND 50 AUTOMOBILES WILL BE SHIPPED TO HAITI WHILE THE GOTT AWAITS INFORMATION ON THE NUMBER OF REFRIGERATORS AND STOVES DESIRED. PRESS REPORTS ALSO STATE THAT VAL ROGERS, THE GOTT'S CHIEF EXPORT PROMOTION OFFICER, WILL VISIT HAITI THIS WEEK TO DETERMINE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF GARMENTS TO BE TRADED UNDER THE AGREEMENT. HE WILL REPORTEDLY BE ACCOMPANIED BY TWO LOCAL GARMENT MANUFACTURERS.

3. COMMENT: ACCORDING TO THE PRIME MINISTER, THE "INTERIM" FEATURE OF THIS AGREEMENT IS THAT IT WAS MADE PENDING FULL STUDY OF HAITI'S APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM). JUDGING FROM THE COMMODITIES INVOLVED IN THE SHORT RUN, IT SEEMS TO US TO BE MORE OF A "STOP-GAP ARRANGEMENT TO ALLEVIATE TEMPORARY SHORTAGES THAN A LONG-TERM AGREEMENT WITH ANY MEANINGFUL TRADE IMPLICATIONS. FOR INSTANCE, TRINIDAD'S RICE NEEDS ARE NORMALLY MET BY GUYANA (BUT THE AGREEMENT EXPIRED LAST YEAR FOLLOWING A SEVERE SHORTFALL); TRINIDAD IS OF COURSE AN EXPORTER OF RAW SUGAR (BUT OFTEN UNDERESTIMATES ITS REQUIREMENT FOR REFINED SUGAR); AND THE LOCAL FLOUR MILL (MAJORITY OWNED BY THE GOTT) IS JUST COMPLETING AN EXPANSION TO BE ABLE TO MEET DOMESTIC NEEDS. FURTHERMORE, THE LOCAL GARMENT MANUFACTURERS HAVE BEEN COMPLAINING ABOUT DEPRESSED MARKET CONDITIONS, AS HAVE LOCAL AUTO ASSEMBLY PLANTS, SO THE PM'S ANNOUNCEMENT SEEMS TO CONTAIN SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE, AT LEAST FROM TRINIDAD'S POINT OF VIEW.

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